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## PROBABLE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF AMERICAN WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

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Any comprehensive program of vocational education must be designed primarily to prepare young persons for the effective exercise of productive vocations as now found; it may be designed secondarily and incidentally to anticipate probable social changes in the character and incidence of vocational activities; and, under some circumstances (taking due account of the relatively fundamental and only slightly controllable character of economic forces), to further desirable, and to restrain undesirable, economic tendencies by its emphasis on one or the other of different possible educational objectives.

It is well known that the economic position of women has already changed greatly during the last century, and conspicuously in communities in which productive work is chiefly of an industrial and commercial character. It is probable that many of the economic changes now in process will continue along lines already established, some of their social, cultural, and physical consequences becoming increasingly evident. But it is also certain that societies in which concerted and intelligent action, looking toward conservation of the best in human resources and the promotion of higher social standards generally, has become an established policy, will insist on securing improved conditions for the development of the young, and with especial emphasis on sound family life. The mother of children is the logical primary custodian of children's well-being; and in their rearing will be found, inevitably, the best vocation for many women—best for the individual herself and best for the society which she serves.

<sup>1</sup>The substance of this paper constitutes a chapter in a forthcoming book on *Vocational Education*. The purpose here is to indicate the considerations which underlie the making of programs of vocational education for women and girls.

For training in the performance of all forms of economic service, including the rearing of children, women in the past to an extent even greater than in the case of men have been dependent upon the by-education of productive service itself as carried on by elders. The daughter has learned the thousand practical arts of homemaking as an assistant to her mother, supplemented by the trial-and-error methods of her own home when responsibility for its conduct fell to her lot. The domestic servant has learned under the direction of mistress; the tiller of the soil under leadership of field foreman or forewoman; the factory hand under shop overseer; the clerk under employer or supervisor. For only a few of women's callings—teaching, nursing, stenography—have the methods of unorganized or organized apprenticeship been replaced by systematic vocational training.

But no student of contemporary social conditions or of current proposals for improvement in our social economy can doubt that an enormous extension and improvement of systematic vocational education under public control and direction is inevitable in the near future. The provision of universal and perfected means of direct vocational education at the proper time (usually after the essential foundations of liberal education shall have been laid) clearly constitutes one of the most necessary stages toward the good citizenship, the social efficiency, now being sought in our complicated societies. It is hard for us to realize that almost in proportion as economic processes become scientific and highly organized, the possibilities of getting reasonably satisfactory vocational training as a by-product of early participation in productive work itself—possibilities that were very large under primitive conditions of production—steadily diminish. Hence the need for vocational training is itself a specialized stage or process apart from, or closely guarded within, the productive processes themselves. Such segregated vocational training is certainly not less needed today for women, than for men, workers; and, in spite of the necessarily primitive and composite character of the domestic vocational arts, it is probably not less needed as a means of efficient homemaking than as a means of effective service in commercial, industrial, agricultural, and professional callings.

At present, very naturally, all programs for the vocational training of girls and women are largely provisional and even opportunistic. In fact, they are based primarily upon first-hand appreciations, not of social needs in general, but of certain marked socially pathological situations that have been seen vividly, first by social workers, then by educators. But to a constantly increasing extent, these programs must come to be based upon scientific knowledge of what are the established or probable fields of women's work; the probable transitions in economic service that will be made by women of given classes, ages, and abilities; the physical, social, and cultural concomitants of each prevailing type of work; and the most effective reasons and means of giving and testing definite vocational training therefor.

It is the purpose of this paper to analyze certain problems, as yet largely unsolved, relative to the probable economic future of American women during the twentieth century, on the assumption that present tendencies will continue in directions already established; and, in the light of the probabilities described, to suggest possible policies and programs for the vocational education of girls and women. As a preliminary to the analysis of these problems, it seems desirable to summarize briefly certain general conclusions as to which it is believed substantial agreement among well-informed students of economics and social life generally exists. These are:

1. Women, normally, have always been producers of economic service no less than men.
2. Productive work has always been largely differentiated between men and women as to location and character.
3. The admission of woman to non-domestic occupations, though attended by great difficulties, is now substantially an accomplished fact.
4. Woman's participation in non-domestic occupations promises to be increasingly regulated by law, in the interests of a sound social economy.
5. The effective rearing of children in the capacity of wife and mother must always have priority of importance as woman's work.
6. Few effective means of vocational education for non-domestic employments have yet developed for women.

#### A. SOME ACCEPTED POSITIONS

1. *Women as producers.*—In all normal societies, and in all but a few exceptional cases of individuals and small classes, women

have always been producers of economic service equally at least with men. (The term "economic service" is here used to include the rearing of children, leadership in planning and directing work, defense of the state, socially approved commercialized entertainment, and teaching, no less than the production of material utilities.) It is a reasonable expectation that women will, in proportion to their strength and ability, always continue to be, no less than men, producers of valuable service. From time to time in past history, as well as at present, wealthy and powerful men have been able and have preferred to maintain their wives, daughters, and female entertainers in that half-parasitic condition which enhances their aesthetic and convivial attractiveness. This practice is clearly traceable to beginnings in ages of conquest when the men of the conquering class reserved to themselves the vocations of fighting, lawgiving, and general administration. It has rarely affected so large a proportion of the population in the past as to lead to disastrous eugenic consequences; but the effects of segregating from useful service a substantial proportion of women and of making of them a non-productive "decorative" class may be proving disastrous in areas where great industries and commerce have enabled, not 1 or 2 per cent, but 10 or 20 per cent of strong men to become so prosperous that they can carry into effect their very natural ideals of maintaining their wives in idle luxury, their daughters in parasitic uselessness, and their entertainers in a state of "conspicuous" but socially unproductive consumption. But it is to be expected that the increasing social insight of our time will soon forewarn and forearm us against this form of social disease. (See Olive Schreiner's *Woman and Labor*.)

2. *Differentiation of productive work.*—In all societies of which we have record there have existed tendencies, never wholly complete, toward differentiation of productive work along sex lines. Defense and aggression against animals and hostile humans has fallen largely to men, probably in part because of their greater mobility, and in part perhaps because of their greater share of the combative instincts (as in some animal species). The care of young children (including the giving of much early hy-education) seems naturally to fall to women, partly because the physical condition of their functions requires them to be less mobile and

undoubtedly because maternal instincts making for child care are stronger than are the paternal instincts to the same end, especially as applied to very young children.

On these foundations, as societies have evolved, many other differentiations have taken place. Men, being first warriors and hunters, have then become trappers, explorers, sailors, fishermen, drovers, traders, miners, and lumbermen. Women become cooks, weavers, dressers of skins, food packers, gardeners, milkers, brewers, builders, wood gatherers, nurses, and teachers of little children. Old men and handicapped men shared early in the more home-centered occupations. When more roving occupations failed, men in the settled regions have often seemed to specialize in those forms of productive service requiring most sustained and greatest physical strength, especially if these occupations are carried on at some distance from the home. Occupations of building, heavy tillage, transporting, and merchandising thus fall to men, although in all primitive societies where women seem to develop bodily strength nearly, if not wholly, equal to that of men, and especially when war or slavery forces men away, women seem readily to become heavy tillers and bearers of burdens—occupations which probably they have never more than partially surrendered.

The invention of machinery and the use of power have often had the effect of centering production in factories away from the home; and apparently men first fall heir to these new vocations, such as baking, machine weaving, machine shoemaking, iron and steel working, brickmaking, brewing, milking, food packing, etc. Certain occupations—originally domestic and apparently shared equally by men and women, especially healing and religious ministry—became early monopolized by men, while others, like entertaining, teaching, lore transmitting, literature making, etc., have after a period of such monopoly returned to the state of being “open” to men and women equally.

In modern industrial and commercial societies, so much of productive work is centered in factories, office buildings, large stores, and other places far removed from the home that we have, conspicuously in all urban communities, and visibly even in rural communities, the phenomenon of women wageworkers—that is,

women who no longer render their service in the family unit (and receiving payment, not in money, but in kind) but in places and conditions unconnected with the home. The United States Census for 1910 shows that of all the enumerated inhabitants the following percentages of each age group were engaged in "gainful" occupations:<sup>1</sup>

	Age 10-13	Age 14-16	Age 16-20	Age 21-44	Age 45 and upward
Males . . . . .	17 per cent	41 per cent	79 per cent	97 per cent	86 per cent
Females . . . . .	8 per cent	20 per cent	40 per cent	26 per cent	16 per cent

Of the more than eight million women wageworkers (in "gainful" occupations) included in these figures, probably about one million are domestic servants; the rest are following occupations away from the home and having no direct connection therewith. The figures from previous censuses show that the proportions of women wageworkers are steadily increasing (the percentages in 1900 were for the respective age groups about 6, 18, 32, 21, and 13).

3. *Difficulties of transition to non-domestic employments.*—The increasing necessities laid upon women to find opportunities for productive service away from the home have naturally resulted in conflicts of ancient custom with new conditions. Where rising standards of living had released women from hard and grimy manual occupations—tillage of soil, harvesting, milking of cows, drawing of coal in mines, wood carrying, fish cleaning and distributing, as practiced in Europe, were early tabooed by the prosperous American settler for his "women folk"—it has been deemed degrading for women to resume them. Probably, also, acquired physical disqualifications for such "masculine" employments, due to more "delicate" rearing, have played an important part in preventing any return to them.

Where men had long monopolized certain attractive occupations (preaching, practice of law, medicine, teaching in mixed or boys' schools, clerical office work—until after the Civil War—"political office-holding," indoor salesmanship—until the eighties—telegraphy, machine-shop work, tailoring, dentistry, pharmacy, architecture, and engineering), there had naturally developed strong

<sup>1</sup> *Fourteenth Census*, IV, 73.

prejudices against the entrance of women competitors. All sorts of barriers, some due to motives consciously mean and selfish, others to commendable, even though shortsighted, desires to keep women out of "non-wholesome" surroundings, abnormal work, or employment that might impair the home, have been raised. Very naturally, in those to whom the wish must be father to the thought, it has been conceived that woman's strength of body or, no less often, of mind, could not be equal to the requirements of the work as standardized for men workers.

When strikes or war deprive a given field of employment of male workers, employers naturally seek to recruit their forces with women, if immigrant or colored men are unavailable. This "unfair" competition of women with men arouses keen apprehensions and leads to prejudices that long survive the events that provoked them. Women workers organize, or act in organized ways, less readily or effectively than men; hence where the workers of a given field—shoemaking, cigarmaking, bookbinding, typesetting, telegraphy, tailoring, and other similar fields—have secured and are maintaining advantages through organization each threatened invasion of "scab" women workers is bitterly resented. In some fields of highly subdivided labor, the superior nimbleness and powers of concentration of girl workers are a perpetual irritation to their less dexterous brothers and male cousins.

For these, as well, doubtless, as for more obscure reasons, resting on vague instinctive reactions (some of which, perhaps, are sounder than appears on the surface), the way of woman's advance into the fields of wage-earning work has been made painful and often degrading. Nevertheless, opposition has steadily given way. There now exist in law or fixed custom relatively few obstacles to woman's entry upon any calling that may be elected. Vexatious handicaps and restrictions of a more or less disguised nature are still found in large numbers, of course, especially in transitional stages; but substantial and organized opposition is found only where invasion threatens to break down the standards of protection and compensation painfully secured through long efforts of organized labor.

Hence we can assume the early removal in almost complete measure of the factitious barriers to woman's entry upon any field



of work she may seek, and her undisturbed right to participate in its rewards and to share in responsibility for its development so far as this may be consistent with her other obligations to society and to herself.

4. *Social regulation of women's non-domestic work.*—Statutory regulation of the conditions of women's work represents a social tendency of very modern development, and yet already so deeply rooted in our best ideals and practice of social economy as reflected by scientific thought and by legislation that we must accept it as an established conditioning force in relation to woman's place in the modern economic world. This regulation by law of the conditions under which women may work is unquestionably designed in the interests of woman's obligations to society and to herself.

In America and those other civilized nations that have shared in the "industrial revolution" we already see embodied in legislation many provisions regulating the participation of children in wage-earning work; and along with these appear statutes governing for women hours of labor, factory conditions, night work, minimum wage, dangerous employments, and amount and quality of toil as related to time of childbirth. Unless present tendencies shift radically, we may expect a continuous development of regulatory laws and ordinances of this character; and, if scientific knowledge and sound social ideals prevail, we may expect them increasingly to provide for the protection of the health, moral character, standards of living, and family responsibilities of the worker as well as, in respects not included in these, to insure that she discharge in best practicable ways her responsibilities to society as citizen, mother, defender, and producer. In the case of any given individual and for a given space of time, much of this regulation will seem unduly restrictive and even repressive; and, indeed, under poor direction, it may easily become that, no less than the ancient regulatory ordinances of king, church, and guild. Nevertheless, social needs here will clearly have the ascendancy, in part because of the fact that so many women wageworkers are young and insufficiently co-operative, and therefore easily exploited; and in part because of their supposedly low resisting powers, as

compared with men, against low standards of living, excessive hours, moral exposure, and physical hardship.

5. *The effective rearing of children.*—The struggle of an individual to live—to obtain a living and to maintain a desired standard of comfort—need not necessarily involve service valuable to the community nor responsibility for the maintenance of a family or the rearing of children. In the struggle of any given composite social group to survive and advance itself, however, it is inevitably required that first consideration be given to the conditions that make for the effective rearing of children. But the possible contributions respectively of men and women to the rearing of children are necessarily differentiated. In the long run a given society dare not permit either men or women in any substantial numbers to subordinate their family responsibilities to other ends. The pursuit by a people of permissible economic objectives must, for the great majority, be in chief measure a means to wholesome family life (the central and controlling function of which is successful child-rearing), else such a people will perish. In some far-off day society may find means of delegating most of the work of child-rearing to special agencies; but current proposals to that end are usually utopian.

With advancing standards and more intelligent social and private control, we may assume that, as contrasted with the present, the following will progressively be the essential features of family life as relates to the effective rearing of children: (a) the burdens (and compensating satisfactions) of rearing children will be more evenly distributed than at present—involving somewhat larger families for the more intelligent and prosperous, and somewhat smaller families for others than prevail now in America; (b) for a society not wilfully static nor deteriorating in numbers, each normal family will be expected to bring to maturity three children or more according to prevailing rates of marriage, sterility, etc.; (c) marriages will be more intelligently made, and will be entered upon with greater preparation for the responsibilities involved; (d) children, and especially very young children, will be better cared for, and the death-rate among them will steadily diminish; (e) until the state subsidizes the rearing of all children

(an expedient frequently proposed, but unlikely of adoption in the near future) it will give financial assistance only to mothers who, having established approved marriages, are through unforeseen contingency deprived of the needed co-operation of husband—widows' pensions, allowances to wives of drafted soldiers, and injured workers, etc; (f) where service needed in the rearing of children can best be given by the mother, she may expect to be forced and, if necessary, assisted, to devote herself to that work; and where service can best be given by agencies other than the home—school education, health inspection, etc.—it is to be expected that these will be maintained at public expense.

In general, a sound society must insist on proper and adequate motherhood, and will protect it as far as is socially practicable.

6. *Vocational education for non-domestic employments.*—By vocational education is here meant any and all forms of experience-getting, instruction, training, and supervision which finally make the worker productive, including the poorly organized training of simple shop experience under supervision, as well as the systematized training of apprenticeship and trade school. The very conditions under which women have followed productive callings away from the home have prevented the development of valuable private or public training except in a few fields, such as nursing, teaching, and clerical work (chiefly stenography). The woman worker has been introduced first as helper to more skilled male workers or as a specialist on highly subdivided processes as spinner, cartridge filler, buttonhole-maker, folder, garden weeder, can filler, labeler, file clerk.

Furthermore, she has seldom come in to "learn the business"—as, not infrequently at least, has her brother. She has had necessarily the attitude of a casual laborer taking a temporary job. Experience convinced her employers that in 80 or 90 per cent of all cases she would leave early to get married. Often she has been less than a casual laborer; she has been a child earning "pin money," and contributing for a time toward her own support in her parents' home. As a girl she neither wants to stay permanently, nor does she care especially to be advanced to more complicated work. The very processes by which work had been

subdivided and mechanized to fit her powers and limitations have wiped away traditions of apprenticeship and beliefs in importance of definite vocational training. The chief function of the employment manager becomes to pick girls of most promise of native ability; and the forewoman (or, often, foreman) may be trusted soon to "fire" those who could not "make good."

Except in a few lines of work (e.g., the telephone service, select office service, and department stores catering to custom somewhat above the average, in which some good special private vocational training has already been developed) the employers of women workers have always been in sharpest competition with each other, and ready at all times to "steal" each other's best workers; hence any given employer was practically precluded from giving his workers special training; he would only find his best workers stolen and himself the poorer for his efforts.

From the standpoint of making the work of young, uninterested, untrained girl and women workers productive of useful service, the modern industrial and commercial manager has wrought wonders through his use of machinery and organization—as expressed in massing of capital, use of inventions, development of speedy power-driven machinery, subdivision of process, perfection of supervision, advertising for help, penalizing specific forms of incompetency, etc. Cloth manufacture, department-store merchandising, cartridge making, bookbinding, watchmaking, fruit and meat canning, cigarette making, clothing manufacture, drug packing, telephony—these and many other similar lines represent wonderful modern organizations of production; but they do not usually involve the systematic vocational education of workers and, probably, may not be expected to do so in the near future. The very success of this form of enterprise has indeed led to the conviction that training for occupation is nonessential where machine production can be organized on a gigantic scale—a clear case, of course, of reasoning *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Because we see a thousand productive processes evolved to utilize the services of the untrained girl, we assume that the trained girl of equal age will find only these processes available for her. But to accept this conclusion would mean the abrogation of all of society's supposed powers of

invention along educational lines. Are only competing employers original and inventive? To train girl workers for non-domestic vocations will give us many problems; and these will be analyzed and solved. But it is futile to expect competing employers to solve or even to state them for us.

That woman in the twentieth century will be largely free to enter upon any productive work that she may elect, subject to that degree and kind of state regulation that will insure protection of the state's interest in her well-being; and that it is possible and profitable for society collectively, through the state, to undertake to fit her for such work—these are the preliminary theses upon which to base a study of the numberless particular problems for the individual woman and for society which have already developed and which may be expected to continue to develop in connection with her efforts to fulfil the destiny laid upon her originally, we are assured, by Eve, who, in the words of Vaughan Moody, lived to sing to the Lord:

Behold, against thy will, against thy word,  
Against the wrath and warning of thy sword  
Eve has been Eve, O Lord!  
A pitcher filled, she comes back from the brook,  
A wain she comes, laden with mellow ears;  
She is a roll inscribed, a prophet's book  
Writ strong with characters.

#### B. UNSETTLED PROBLEMS

The economic transitions of recent centuries, and especially in the countries where "industrialism" has progressed farthest, have given rise to many difficult social problems, some of which, at least, seem more acutely to affect women than men. Among the most pressing of these problems are those discussed below.

1. *Combining domestic with non-domestic work.*—During the transition period wherein has developed extensive employment of women in non-domestic industries, there appear many cases in which women simultaneously carry on homemaking and work outside the home.

(a) Tillage of the soil, harvesting, fish cleaning and drying, milking, herding, wood gathering, and some other semidomestic occupations, having been in large part woman's work long before the "industrial revolution," have persisted in all primitive communities. Colored women in the South, peasant women in all the continental countries of Europe and Asia, and recent immigrants to America, by reducing home work to a minimum, by developing much muscular power and physical endurance, are obviously able to bear many children, to bring some of these to a rugged maturity, and at the same time to perform what is frequently described as a "man's work" away from the home.

(b) In manufacturing and commercial centers, there are found many families in poor financial circumstances. In these, fathers are usually dead, deserters, invalided, or dissipated, or else are employed irregularly or in some unskilled, poorly paid work. As a consequence, the mothers, simplifying their home work to the utmost, seek wage-earning employments. They work in mills, as "day" domestics, as cleaners of office buildings, and in other fields in which unskilled laborers, made energetic by desperate necessity, are in demand.

(c) A few women of superior talent—actresses, singers, teachers, writers, saleswomen—have, after marriage, continued to follow apart from the home the productive service in which they had become adept before marriage. As a historic fact, many of these women have, naturally or voluntarily, remained sterile; but in other instances they have reared normal families, aided by employed domestic service.

(d) A small number of mothers, having brought a normal number of children to that degree of maturity where their immediate demands for "mother-care" have been less pressing, have resumed former employments or undertaken new work away from the home, sometimes as a means of furthering personal development or as a means of adding to family income.

2. *Homemaking as an exclusive vocation.*—But in the large majority of cases in all countries where a substantial portion of the population has reached a comfortable standard of living, work

outside the home for the married woman is held in disapproval both by expert and by popular opinion.

(a) Where young men and young women are both engaged in wage-earning, it is customary for them to abstain from marriage until, in each case, the man's income is believed to be sufficient to "maintain a home"—which implies the expectation that the wife shall be relieved of obligation to work for wages and shall be free to give her time exclusively to the upkeep of the home and the care of the children expected in it.

(b) The laboring man whose wife must "go out to work" becomes an object of pity or contempt according to the degree to which he is culpably responsible for such necessity.

(c) It is generally conceded that in the case of all families having young children and modal incomes—in America this might well mean children under fourteen or fifteen—the absence of the mother in wage-earning work operates to the serious physical and moral detriment of the children unless substitute care be provided. Such detriment must, obviously, be interpreted in terms of an approved real or expected standard of living, as this makes for physical and moral wholesomeness. It is clear that a rising standard of living means new requirements on mother care.

(d) Families in exceptionally good financial circumstances have long followed the practice of delegating care of children in large part. Employed nurses and tutors take charge during younger years; and in England the boarding school claims many boys and some girls after nine or ten years of age. Whether the rearing thus provided is equal or superior to that which the mother, devoting her energies primarily to her children, could give, is yet an open question; but in view of the very small number of families to whom this delegation of parental responsibilities is financially practicable, the question is of small importance. Once in a million cases, perhaps, we can find a Madame Schumann-Heink who can, by virtue of unusual physical strength and exceptional talent for a non-domestic vocation, render great service away from the home and at the same time rear a fine family; but social programs can hardly be based on cases so exceptional.

3. *Demands for "better families."*—In the evolution of conscious social policies relative to the homemaking vocation, to supplement the present social inheritance of customs and traditions based partly upon old human instincts and partly upon empirical experience accumulated under the spur of necessity, it is clearly urgent that the conditions of effective homemaking in accordance with modern approvable standards should be analyzed, delimited, and described. What constitutes optimum "mother-care" of infants and children? To what extent, under what circumstances, and at what financial cost can that care, in whole or in part, be delegated? To what extent, under what circumstances, and to what advantage, financial or other, can the pursuit of occupations supplemental to, or in substitution of, mother-care be profitably followed by the mother?

It is needless to state here that from the standpoint of social evolution the primary function of the home is the rearing of children during the prolonged years of "infancy" which has become a racial condition in the human species. The adequate maintenance of the home, at least in temperate zones, has entailed the monogamous and life-long union of the father and mother, and, as a consequence, the home serves the important secondary function of being a place of rest and recreation for the father, who is of course essentially a non-domestic worker. The mother, as homekeeper and children's guardian, develops various kinds of domestic productive service, which are best generalized under the term "homemaking." In all normal societies it can be assumed that the two parents contribute equally to the complete support of the home. Under special circumstances—e.g., where men extensively develop social habits of dissipation, where prosperous men put a premium on the decorative functions of wives and daughters, in settlement of the frontier, or where, after a long period in which men have specialized in defensive functions and women in manual toil, conditions of peace are established which do not for a time diminish the woman's work, but permit the man to exist in comparative idleness—the men in some of these cases, or the women in others, are forced to make a disproportionate contribution, whether of labor or of suffering; but such conditions occur only in exceptional classes and periods.



Rising standards of living and changing conditions due to civilization impose upon both parents larger responsibilities, often only partially offset by increase of knowledge, of productive power due to invention, etc. A longer period of parental protection for children; diminished mortality and morbidity rates; more adequate nurture, clothing, shelter, and education; more "social" advantages; later entry upon self-supporting employment; a "better start in life"—these become goals, individual and social, of family rearing in all civilized societies. The three most visible effects of these rising standards are: the mother must give fuller personal care to her children, especially in their younger years; the father must increase his output of productive service in order to procure the exchangeable goods necessary for family support; and the state undertakes certain functions—e.g., education, and, in less measure, health supervision and relief of destitute—which parents cannot well perform.

A secondary social product of these rising standards appearing in recent years, and especially in most progressive societies—as judged at least by conventional standards—is the voluntary diminution of the number of children to be reared, and, by inference and expectation at least, the more adequate rearing of this diminished number. A first manifestation of this tendency is found in the postponement of marriage among many classes, and especially the professional; a second, in the diminished marriage-rate, at least in some societies, of the socially "unfit"—the dissipated, the defective, and the ne'er-do-well; a third, in the social disapproval of excessively large families—the "rabbit warren" type—especially among the poor; and a fourth, in voluntary restriction among the sensitive and intelligent of the size of family to that which is in a measure compatible with the interests of the parents in the proper rearing of their children, the conservation of the health of the mother, and the building up of a capital reserve for the parents in their old age.

That the possibilities of restricting size of family in the interests of quality of human beings reared can be and are subject to gross abuses is unquestionable. Without doubt, an undue number of men now forego marriage altogether, some from the most selfish of motives. Some men, and doubtless some women, remain celibate

because of the acquisition of excessively developed qualities of so-called refinement, which represent in reality only refined selfishness. It is certain that in countries like France, New Zealand, England, and America, where social caste has broken down and ascent in the social scale is easy, a disastrously large proportion of married couples evade altogether or in large part their obligations to society as regards insuring families of proper size. Motives for this are varied, ranging from the completely selfish to those involving, perhaps, a misguided sense of social gain to result from the success of the unhandicapped man in art, science, business leadership, war leadership, or social prominence.

“Down to Gehenna or up to the throne,  
He travels fastest who travels alone.”

It is still, of course, a complex unsettled problem as to how far the entire range of powers and capacities of the mother of a normal family, capable of being devoted to productive service, may not be required for child-rearing, especially during the years from marriage to the time when the youngest child shall be at least twelve years of age. In the case of a woman marrying at twenty-three years of age and rearing four children, it is reasonable to assume that her personal care will be closely required on behalf of her children until she is forty-two years of age. It is furthermore here offered as a contention that by all modern standards the family responsibilities of such a mother during her twenty most active years must claim substantially all her effective working time and energy. Society may be expected increasingly to look upon the supersession of maternal duties, either by voluntarily assumed or by enforced labor in non-domestic vocations, as in the nature of a misfortune to the rising generation. Variations from this principle there will undoubtedly be; but they will arise from circumstances so exceptional that they will be of the nature of those variations from the normal the justification of which on the part of given individuals will entail a substantial burden of proof.

4. *Domestic versus non-domestic vocations.*—What are the relationships likely to prove most common between woman's work in homemaking and her work in non-domestic employments? The history of recent decades points to the following possible answers:

(a) The postponement of marriage together with the withdrawal of many kinds of productive work from the home has rendered it necessary for the daughters of the family, no less than the sons, in large numbers to seek openings for productive service away from the home. This is especially true of communities devoted largely to industrial and commercial pursuits. For example, the Census of 1910 shows the following proportions (percentages) of women of each age group engaged in "gainful" occupations:

State	Females 10-13 Years	Females 14-15 Years	Females 16-20 Years	Females 21-44 Years	Females 45 and upward
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Massachusetts.....	.3	24	60	39	18
Iowa.....	.7	9	29	20	9
Pennsylvania.....	1.3	21	44	23	13
Kansas.....	.7	4	22	16	10

All of these figures are rendered difficult of interpretation for the purposes in hand here by the fact that the fourth age group includes at least two or three and, for certain higher economic levels, probably four to six years of the usual "premarriage" wage-working years of the women involved. Nevertheless, it is clear that in all states, and conspicuously in those predominantly industrial and commercial, from one-fourth to nearly two-thirds of all women give their "premarriage" years (after school years close) to non-domestic employments; and there is little reason to expect that this condition will change in the direction of increasing the proportion of domestic work.

(b) Where regular home employment is insufficient for mother and growing daughters numerous attempts are made to bring wage-earning, non-domestic work into the home. In cities the addressing of envelopes, feather-work, novelty work, and piece-work (for example, sewing on of buttons, etc., on manufactured clothing) are sought. In a few country areas the manufacture of cheap cigars by farmers' wives and daughters in the home has proven profitable. But no general developments in this direction can now be traced, and the trend of "sweatshop" legislation, as well as the opposition of social students to the probable incident

abuses (hygienic, forced child labor, etc.), would seem to indicate that such forms of work have little future. The development of electrically driven textile and other machinery has led to some extravagant hopes that each home may once again become what it formerly was in some cases—a little workshop for the whole family. For the present these expectations must be regarded as utopian. Problems of organization, supervision, and transportation seem insurmountable. The natural lines of development of non-domestic work for rural women would seem to be in the direction of soil tillage and light stock-raising; but these also as “extra-home” vocations for women seem to be diminishing rather than increasing.

(c) It is here assumed that, as stated before, society cannot well expect or even permit non-domestic “full-time” wage-work for women after marriage and during the time when children are still young.

(d) Could “part-time” wage-earning work for mothers be approved? If a mother cannot teach a full day, could she not teach a half day? Could not mothers living near factories give four or five hours daily to wage-earning? These questions are often raised; and public interest in them is such that much experimentation may be expected in the near future. The theoretic possibilities of good arrangements of this sort seem strong; but some of the most formidable obstacles to them are generally ignored. Modern production involves a constantly enlarging proportion of capital (tools, housing, etc.) and organization (supervision, regimentation, routine) in proportion to labor. To an increasing extent labor must work according to schedule, else waste of capital (idle tools, etc.) and excessive cost of “overhead” service—supervision, planning, etc.—become inevitable. The outlook for part-time service, especially if the “part-time” must also be somewhat irregular, is not promising, but nevertheless requires fullest experimentation.

(e) Can women, after children are grown, find profitable non-domestic employment? The answer involves the same difficulties as those discussed under (d) above, and the added one that these possible workers would be past the age at which they could readily

learn new processes. Here, also, close analytical studies of existing situations and experimentation seem highly desirable.

5. *What are "suitable" types of work for women?—*

(a) It can readily be assumed that most women, by instinct and as a result of custom inheritance, are peculiarly qualified for "homemaking" work as that has evolved through the ages. But where homemaking is required of a highly trained and gifted woman, it may seem in individual instances socially less productive than other work for her. To what extent and under what circumstances can she delegate homemaking? Some problems arising in this connection have been discussed above.

(b) It is probable that old preconceptions as to the "intellectual unfitness" of women for certain types of work will have to be put into cold storage during the twentieth century, at least until a time when more scientific evidence relative to general dissimilarities between men and women as to intellectual quality shall have been accumulated and interpreted. Only relatively few men, of course, are capable of meeting the intellectual standards set by the age for scientific research, practice of a profession, military leadership, teaching advanced students, literary production, business leadership, etc. Whether, given the same social incentives and opportunities, the percentage of women who could attain to equal proficiency is smaller or larger is certainly not yet known.

(c) Among economically prosperous people it seems that women develop less physical strength and those kinds of hardihood that we customarily identify with work in the open than do men. As a consequence, it is customary to assume that women cannot do many of the kinds of heavy work in which men frequently engage. This impression is heightened by the fact that among many of the best-known mammals and birds the female is less strongly built than the male. On the other hand, among primitive peoples and the economically less prosperous tillers of the soil today (Asia, Central Europe) women by custom carry on much heavy work, and, apparently, develop bones and muscles hardly less strong and capable of enduring long and heavy work than those of men. At all stages in recorded history, where the ideal of the "decorative" woman has prevailed among the leisure class or

workers of high rank, girls of these classes have been reared with standards of small feet, slender waists, half-developed muscles, and soft skins in view. The product has often been a much, if not excessively, feminized woman, who, among her other defects of specialization toward the "beautiful," includes a greatly diminished capacity for heavy physical toil and endurance. The same results would happen and frequently have happened to men as effects of similar ideals and consequent practices. How far, therefore, we must accept as inherent woman's alleged natural disqualifications for heavy work—lifting, tilling, building, digging, portering, mining, etc.—seems yet an open question.

If, however, it should prove that, naturally, a smaller body and less physical strength are the portion of women in general, or that women should, on account of possible injuries to organs essential to child-bearing, be spared "heavy work," then the consequences in vocational education will be important, although probably less important as mechanisms employing natural powers become perfected. The same results would follow, of course, if it should appear that those decorative qualities in women which seem to require certain kinds of physical underdevelopment should prove to be more than adventitious assets to society. Conceivably, it may be very important, from the standpoints of aesthetic demands, sexual selection, etc., that all women should be schooled and shaped to the physical attractiveness and delicacy formerly possible only to the wives, daughters, and specialized entertainers of the conquering and the wealth-holding classes. If this be so, then we shall differentiate indoor salesmanship, simple forms of factory work, and hundreds of "light" employments for young women during their premarriage years, because, on the one hand, these young women, softly reared, will prove unadapted to heavier work, and because, on the other hand, they will thereby avoid those forms of toil which most handicap them as regards physical attractiveness. Obviously, the unsettled problems here are numerous, intricate, and perhaps, until we shall know more about social psychology, baffling. But it is highly probable that, owing to natural or social fitness, men will prevailingly continue to fill some occupations and women others. The reasons for this differen-

tiation may be economic rather than physical and social. But, as the place and circumstances of a given occupation change, it may well pass from one sex to another. Milking, baking, and skin-dressing, once tied up with the home, first were women's work; but, away from the home, they became men's occupations. The work of the street-car conductor was formerly heavy and disagreeable to an extent that marked it out manifestly for men; but when the job becomes one chiefly of collecting fares in the protected entrance of a car, there is no reason why it should not be given to a woman, or, more properly, a girl.

6. *Can men and women workers expect equal pay for equal work?* —There are many obscure elements involved in this problem. It has previously been suggested that, under average economic conditions, women do *as much* work as men. This is very different from saying that men and women can compete on equal terms in non-domestic (or, obviously also, domestic) forms of employment. The following special problems are involved:

(a) It is essential that "pay for work" should be thought of as far as practicable in terms of exchange of economic utilities and not in terms of the counter "money." Men and women work, primarily, in order that they may produce, beyond the products of their labor which they can themselves consume, products which can be exchanged for the required products of others. It is practically impossible to designate absolute "values" for these products; all experience shows that, except in the case of collective interference with demand in the interest of health or safety, the "values" attached to various forms of service and product are the resultants of demand and supply. Private individual or corporate effort can interfere somewhat with the operation of the law of supply and demand in regulation of values (as expressed in prices), as through corporate monopoly, trade-union regulation, fashion, advertising, education; and the state through minimum wage laws, sumptuary regulations, state monopoly, can also cause some marked divergences from the normal values determined by the free operation of the law. Nevertheless, like sea-level as a base of earth measurements, or year-round average temperature in a given area, the resultant values given by the law of supply and

demand can never be ignored or greatly departed from. In general, then, it may be assumed that when the demand for the services or the products of any class of workers is large and the supply of such service or product small, a relatively large quantity of "exchangeable" goods will be offered; and, when reversed conditions prevail, a small amount; and that neither custom, private monopoly, nor law can more than slightly affect this resultant.

(b) Society does not now subject children, dependent poor people, the sick or the aged, those severely handicapped physically, or those who, like soldiers, are temporarily drafted for public service, to the struggle involved in the competitive industrial order. But it does require normal adults to be "self-supporting," which means, in fact, that these are expected to sell their services in the best possible market, and that buyers of such services or their products will strive to get them at the best possible (buyer's) price. Broadly speaking, then, a given normal child from birth to perhaps sixteen consumes more economic service day by day than he produces, the adverse balance being largest from perhaps nine to sixteen. Thereafter he produces more than he consumes until perhaps sixty-five years of age, the maximum favorable balance being between the years twenty-five and fifty. From sixty-five to death at eighty, this individual consumes more than he produces, apart from the service rendered to society by even the very old man as "capital holder." It is from sixteen to sixty-five, in this case, that the law of supply and demand regulating wages operates.

An extreme school of collectivists would abrogate the operation of the law of supply and demand by establishing the principle "to each according to his needs, from each according to his ability," which is now, on any given economic plane, the custom-based practice as regards children. But for the present we must assume among independent adult workers the nearly free operation of competition in buying and selling services (or their products). Under these conditions, subject to slight offsets from custom and monopolization, "equal pay for equal work" will certainly prevail; and the pay will always be that for which the cheapest worker can be had. This process will necessarily be obscured (perhaps



in a measure departed from) in public service (e.g., public-school teaching) where standards of service rendered are indefinite and the employer—"the public"—seems possessed of unlimited means of adding to the compensation of workers alleged to be "underpaid." Similarly, in the case of large corporations having great assets and not subject to keen competition, sentiment or fear may for a time force wage rates to artificial levels, doubtless often the case with "high officials" and sometimes with the rank and file of workers.

(c) But in almost every case it is practically certain that men and women will not work alongside each other on terms of economic equality. The "pull" of economic demand for persons of a given grade of native ability, training, and adaptability will not operate equally. For example, to one thousand men chosen at random, economic opportunities are now available of such kind and quantity as to make, let us say, elementary-school teaching at present rates of compensation a tenth or twentieth best calling; whereas to an equal number of women it is now a first, second, or, possibly in some cities, a third best calling. Naturally and inevitably, unless society places a special premium on men because they can render a kind of service that women cannot render, such teaching will become "woman's work" and the men will strive toward those callings which pay better.

(d) A very large factor in this economic differentiation, although obscurely recognized at present, is the difference in demands being made upon men and women workers respectively. For a given economic level, it may be assumed that during the years constituting the "premarriage" period for women in large numbers, youths and maidens will impose demands for wages only slightly above the living expenses of the individual. But between ages twenty-five and fifty, in the large (and therefore controlling) majority of cases the situations of permanent men and women workers (in the case of women, chiefly celibate) change in marked degree. The permanently single woman at twenty-six may, and, in the case of teachers, nurses, etc., often does, have as many "dependents" as men of the same age; but at forty-six society expects the man to have four to seven dependents, whereas the

single woman, who is the only frequent competitor, now, commonly, has only herself. Because this is so in the controlling number of cases for a given social plane of intelligence, standard of living, and natural competency, all components of the "demand" made by the class collectively for exchangeable goods (the measure of normal wages), men workers from twenty-five to fifty will strive to pre-empt fields into which women cannot fit; and, equally, women will be given almost exclusive possession of those forms of work which they can do best. Some of the stronger of the women will always be looking longingly into the fields given to the men; and their potential rather than real competition may be expected always to be a source of irritation, apprehension, and recriminating discussion.

7. *Women in the professions and leadership.*—To many young women of ability and ambition come, very naturally, aspirations to prepare themselves for those professional callings, as well as forms of leadership, for which many years of expensive training and of poorly remunerated apprenticeship are essential. Many capable women of middle age who are in their own thoughts permanent celibates, become ambitious to be promoted to positions of authority and leadership for which their abilities and experience seem to qualify them. In these cases women have always encountered obstacles more or less factitious, the vestigial remains of which still are found.

The problems involved here are by no means solved, however, when artificial barriers to training and promotion have been removed. Take, for example, the practice of medicine as a profession; should we recommend it as a desirable vocation to a young woman of requisite ability and interest? Persons preparing for this profession usually embark on its study at or about twenty to twenty-three years of age. They will probably be thirty years of age before they can expect to be self-supporting. Cost of training is heavy, both to the individual and to the state (or, in lieu of state support, philanthropic endowments provided for the encouragement of this professional training). Granting that a properly qualified woman who remains single can build up and maintain a good medical practice, should the *young* woman be encouraged to undertake the preliminary steps involved? We

should first, of course, decide as far as practicable whether, for the woman prepared to practice medicine, homemaking and family rearing are compatible with a professional career. Instances of the successful union of the two we have, of course; but do they prove the desirability of the attempt in general? Or should we assume that the woman who wishes to prepare herself for a difficult profession should, in effect, pledge herself to celibacy?

Similar problems arise in connection with leadership as found in such posts as foreman, school principal, department-store buyer, hotel manager, etc. Most of the women who work at teaching, manufacturing, store salesmanship, and clerical service are young; during their earlier years of service they usually expect to marry, and often their interests in matrimonial prospects constitute an absorbing preoccupation. At the time when the best men workers in these fields are just beginning to feel that their experience constitutes a solid basis for further study, many of the best women workers terminate their wage-earning careers. Those who find it desirable or necessary to go on are apt to come late to the conviction that they should begin to qualify themselves for promotion to directive work. Should we endeavor to induce the ablest of these workers early to begin to plan for promotion? The situation in public education is a good example. From 75 to 90 per cent of all teachers in the elementary and high schools are women. Beginners of both sexes start on a substantial parity as regards compensation and duties. But positions of direction go chiefly to men. Prepossessions of employing authorities—that women principals cannot manage big boys, that women teachers do not work so well under women principals—play a part in this, but probably not a great part in recent years. More marked is the indisposition of women teachers (except kindergartners) during the ages from twenty-four to thirty to take leads, to show professional initiative, to prepare for advanced work.

Obviously, problems involved in woman's relationship to vocations exacting long preparation must be studied in the light of agreement upon principles (or well-supported hypotheses at least) as to desirable attitude of women toward family life, and necessary limitations imposed by family life.

8. *The "college woman."*—Only within recent years have women in large numbers sought a college education. Now they seem likely to exceed the number of men in liberal-arts courses. The relation of a "liberal-arts education," leading to the degree of A.B., Ph.B., LL.B., or non-technical B.S., to prospective vocations, is yet a matter of uncertainty to the public and, it would also seem, to college professors. No one can pretend that a general college course is vocational in any definite sense, except possibly for some departmental work in high-school teaching—and that is the case not so much because any college prepares for that work as because high-school teaching itself is not yet, in America, based upon professional standards.

Nevertheless, the colleges generally do not make the actual functions of a college education clear to their students or to the public. College professors, in debates and articles, defend affirmative answers to the question, "Does a college education pay?" without distinguishing sharply between the "paying" which is essentially financial and the outcome of successful participation in vocations, and those other kinds of "paying" which are the effect of enrichment in personal culture, enhanced values in citizenship, greater control of health, and the like.

It will prove, of course, very hard to ascertain whether a college education ever or generally pays in the first sense. College students, and, still more, college graduates, represent of course the picked personalities of the time and regions to which they belong. Only persons of superior heredity, superior rearing, and superior lower education, in general, go to college. Success (as commonly esteemed) in vocational, as well as in other activities, is, in general, assured for these superior persons. Whether a general college education adds to prospects for success in a vocation is clearly not certain, notwithstanding the blind devotion of many college professors to the magic of "mental discipline." That a college education "pays" through enrichment of personal culture and general social or civic usefulness is probable, otherwise the "liberal-arts courses" lose all excuse for being.

Now the situation confronting women graduating from general college courses is difficult. They are naturally superior persons.

They are not generally committed to opportunities for homemaking careers. They want to be self-supporting. They dislike to enter upon "unskilled work." Their mature abilities and, as they often think, their education qualify them for something better. What are the possibilities? Their brothers used to feel the same ambition to begin high up the ladder of earning and responsibility; but now the men usually know enough either to go to a vocational (professional) school after leaving college or else begin at the bottom of the ladder on a railroad, in a broker's office, or even on a farm. But there are few vocational schools open to these women; their mothers frequently oppose their beginning at "the bottom" of any ladder. What can they do? Trifle away time entertaining and being entertained, awaiting the expected "engagement" to enter upon the vocation of homemaking? Confessedly, present conditions present here more unsolved than solved problems.

9. *Effects of mechanization and regimentation.*—Current tendencies toward the mechanization of industrial processes and the regimentation of workers are strong. It is the writer's conviction that further evolution of these tendencies is inevitable. Already it is clear that mechanization of work and subdivision of process greatly increase the variety and range of opportunities open to unskilled and immature girls—they can readily become "tenders" of even complicated machines. It is probable that "machine-tending" will spread. Harvesting, tillage, even milking and ditch-digging, are now done in part by easily managed machines. Could not women drive street cars, electric locomotives, traction-drawn plows, automatic fodder-grinders, as well as adding-machines, looms, tool-grinders, power-driven sewing-machines? Machinery makes a given quantity of productive work easier, and more or less interesting and stimulating. There are as yet many unsolved problems here, and they are for the moment at least of even more concern to women than to men, because women more readily than men fall victims in the numerous pathological situations incident to, if not even in some cases inherent in, "modern" industrialism.

10. *General education.*—In all the more progressive American states all girls (as well as boys) are required to attend full-time day

schools of general education between the ages of six and fourteen. A constantly increasing proportion of young persons from the more prosperous families attend, in addition, high schools (whose primary purposes are also found in the field of general, as distinguished from vocational, education) for one or more years, while the ambitious daughters of the very prosperous go also to college.

The objectives actually realized through this general education (or, in its higher stages, better named, "liberal" education) have not yet been definitely ascertained or described, especially in the upper grades and liberal-arts colleges. In the minds of many persons these objectives include some having relation to vocational fitness. It is obvious, of course, that a person unable to read or write is automatically debarred thereby from many non-manual vocations. But it is not so clear that a general high-school education is essential to the pursuit of higher vocations, public opinion to the contrary notwithstanding. The fact that girls or boys graduating from high school are, on the whole, a "selected" group (as regards native abilities, good early nurture, effective character formation in the home, etc.), and, therefore, likely to succeed well in vocational pursuits which they undertake and to give satisfaction to their employers, has, owing to the prevalent habit of reasoning easily *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, caused employers and even parents to associate success with the high-school education itself—as cause and effect.

But, as an accompaniment of the development of more definite plans for direct vocational education, it is becoming increasingly evident that general or liberal education has, and can have, little positive relationship to vocational competency. The primary objectives of effective general education are to be found in personal culture, civic and moral strength, and physical well-being, as these constitute desirable assets among men and women quite irrespective of vocation. The quality of the physical, social (civic and moral), and cultural education now given in upper grades, high schools, and colleges leaves much to be desired, perhaps in largest degree as it affects girls and women. Much of it rests on psychological assumptions that are largely wrong. Its specific

objectives have been determined in hard-and-fast form frequently by authorities (like committees on college admission) who have very slight knowledge of the actual qualities, powers, and capacities of those for whom they are prescribing, and even less of accurate knowledge of the social conditions to which these young women should be adjusted for later life and in which they can render valuable service. Nevertheless, some important advances have been made in recent years and greater ones are in prospect in proportion as education becomes more scientific as regards its aims and methods.

But it is now rather clear that vocational education and comprehensive general education cannot effectively be carried on side by side. The one tends to exclude the other or rather to take a primary place in the interests and the attention of the learner. Up to fifteen or seventeen or nineteen or twenty-one years of age, according to strength of intellectual interests, family economic circumstances, and social incentives generally, youths can be led easily to give primary attention to "growth," development, and training toward the non-vocational activities of life. As incidental and secondary to this liberal education they can readily be induced to "work for wages" after school hours and during vacations, to read about "careers," and even to study trigonometry, business English, or other subjects of a demonstrably "prevocational" character for ascertained vocations.

When, on the other hand, the time comes—in the case of a few at fourteen, for many at sixteen and at eighteen, and for the exceptional at twenty or twenty-two—for the youth to enter upon a vocation, or upon specific and demonstrably functioning training therefor, as a result of the interplay of his own instinctive development with the pressure of social forces upon him, then he tends, in response to a very real natural incentive as well as wise customs pressing upon him from society, to give to his vocation the lion's share of his interest and effort. None of us could well wish it otherwise. But there is one course which should be followed in the case of the young person concentrating on the earlier stages (as learner or operative) of his vocation; outside the hours—usually the best of the working day—given to that he should be induced,

even aided by supplemental training and instruction and by the public provision of suitable means, if necessary, to give his leisure hours to higher rather than to lower physical, civic, and cultural pursuits. If, for example, a girl of sixteen in a clothing factory or in a "power operating" school preparatory thereto is giving fifty-four hours per week to learning or practicing her vocation, then she should be assisted and inspired to devote a reasonable number of her leisure hours—from thirty to fifty per week—to those extravocational activities that will most enrich her life, continue the growth of her personality, and offset the inevitably cramping effects of her vocational pursuits—since all vocations, even those of homemaking, elementary-school teaching, and nursing, have their "cramping" effects no less certainly than dress-making, cigarette-making, spinning, waiting on table, and selling in a department store.

Now the time at which "full-time" general education should or will cease depends upon many conditions. For many girls and boys in our schools intellectual interests seem greatly to have flagged before fifteen years of age. Where the home economic interests are poor, where the father of four or six children is carrying the burden of supporting an expensive family on a working-man's wages, sensitive children at fifteen or sixteen years of age become eager to help carry the family's load. Some of these children become interested in earning money wherewith to purchase commodities and amusements attractive to themselves. In the case of many city boys of good physical development, the instinctive desire to be doing something "heavy" or "useful" with their muscles doubtless often exerts a strong pressure toward "getting to work." Now that it has become customary for a large proportion of girls to become wageworkers away from the home, the same social pressures are doubtless felt by them as by the boys. Other considerations also affect entrance upon wage-earning employments. For many trades the age of sixteen is, or rather was formerly, looked upon as a desirable time for beginning apprenticeship. The repellent character of the work offered during the first two years of the usual high-school course for pupils



who have no expectations of finishing the course has the effect of rendering all school work intensely distasteful.

It is to be expected that workers in vocational guidance will ere long have given us some standards to guide us in advising girls when to substitute a vocation or vocational training as the central interest of the working day for the work of the school of "general" or "liberal" education. The naïve assumptions of academic schoolmasters that one "cannot have too much of general education" are, of course, essentially *ex parte* contentions. The vague convictions of these same authorities that pupils will continue to profit materially from further attendance on schools of general learning as long as they attend are probably widely at variance with the facts, at least as schools and courses are now provided for youths from twelve to eighteen years of age. More to be approved, perhaps, at least in urban environments and under sharply competitive industrial conditions, is the contention that the longer pupils remain in school the better prepared they will be, in maturity and physical resisting power at least, to withstand the abnormal strains and other adverse conditions incident to modern industrial employment.

II. *Some conditions affecting vocational education.*—As introductory to discussion of problems of vocational education of women and girls, it is necessary to recognize: (a) that the successful pursuit of *any* and *all* vocations requires that the individual should somewhere and somehow have been trained for that pursuit; (b) that under historic conditions such training has been the expected by-product (by-education) of actual participation in the earlier and simpler stages of the vocation; and (c) that only in recent times and, as yet, under exceptional conditions has it been feasible or desirable to separate *vocational training* for proficiency from *vocational participation* for production.

Furthermore, it must be recognized that the modern demand for specialized vocational education (in schools) arises from these convictions more or less widely held: (a) that for many vocations—homemaking, dressmaking, teaching—the conditions and efficacy of apprenticeship have deteriorated greatly in recent years;

(b) that for many other vocations, especially of modern development—stenography and clerical work generally, salesmanship, and scores of kinds of factory employments—apprenticeship education never has been carried to the point of being more than a crude method of trial-and-error selection, accompanied by the slow and clumsy building of experience; (c) that the absence of systematic provision for vocational education works immeasurable harm to individuals, young and old, in permanently holding their productive efficiency below the requirements for a normal standard of living; and (d) that society itself is thereby the loser at all points in the elements that make for social wholesomeness and progress.

It has been previously noted that under American conditions the great majority of girls and women do and will in each case continue to follow two widely unlike vocations—a wage-earning vocation from youth to young womanhood, often from sixteen to twenty-four years of age—after which they will follow for life the vocation of homemaking. In some important respects this situation complicates all problems of vocational education for girls and women, although, in the case of commercial and industrial vocations, these complications are only slightly more serious and difficult than others found in the vocational education of boys and men.

The first difficulty usually encountered is that the girl does not take her wage-earning vocation seriously. For her it is merely a means to the earning of money. She hopes and expects not to follow it long. Except as it brings more money she is not greatly interested in promotion. Given the opportunity to take vocational training, she seeks to shorten the period of such training as much as possible. She remains indifferent to the co-operative help of unions. She develops little of the *esprit de corps* of work. She is easily exploited and the best discipline for dereliction is found in a system of fines.

But the most unsettling difficulty, doubtless, is that her second vocation, homemaking, is one toward which conditions prevent her from moving in anything like a direct way. She must wait the will and pleasure of others. It is often hardly considered dignified openly to anticipate the new career and to prepare for

it. As a consequence of the fact that the wage-earning girl has been for several years hardly more than a boarder in her parents' home or the home of others, and has given little serious thought and almost no preparation to the work of homemaking, it happens frequently that she enters upon this work with the naïve cheerfulness and ignorance of a child and lets her domestic happiness drift upon the rocks of incompetency and discord to the great harm of herself and loss to society.

A third difficulty is encountered as respects those professional vocations for which a long term of years are required in preparation. Capable and ambitious women graduates of high school and even college occasionally manifest keen ambitions to become physicians, architects, painters, writers, or teachers in college or normal school. As a rule these callings require from three to five years of expensive professional training, followed by several years of quasi-apprenticeship, during part of which the individual must be supported (at large expense) by her family, and during no part of which can she expect to be entirely self-supporting. Should girls at eighteen or twenty, who will probably marry before they are thirty years of age, be encouraged to enter upon the long road of preparation for these professional careers, taking the time and using the equipment frequently of expensive institutions of training? Would such training give valuable assets toward homemaking at all in proportion to the outlay made upon it? Many differences of even expert opinion will be found here.

The rapid development of production by means of machinery and the specialization of processes made possible in all highly organized industrial and commercial production have opened endless opportunities for wage-earning work to women and especially to girls of average capacity and moderate training. Endless varieties of productive work are to be found in industrial establishments today in which all that is required of the girl is that she shall be an alert machine-tender. Cloth and clothing manufacture, cigarette-making, fruit packing, small hardware production, bookbinding, jewelry making, printing, telephony, paper-box making—these are but suggestive examples. Somewhat more skilled are the commercial occupations—clerical and salesmanship—which,

by virtue of subdivision and specialization, are being rendered, to a substantial extent, increasingly accessible to half-matured and slightly trained girl workers.

12. *Vocational levels*.—It is often naively assumed that specialized economic production offers, or should offer, opportunities for workers generally to rise in their work toward places of greater responsibility and reward in the same way that was true of the handicraft and other unspecialized callings. This vague assumption has been responsible for the tendency to designate so many juvenile callings as “blind-alley” or “dead-end” occupations.

But it is probably much nearer the facts to describe modern specialized callings in factory, store, and large office as consisting of levels largely, if not wholly, unconnected with each other. The work on certain levels is peculiarly suited to the powers of young people, and often to persons of quite mediocre native abilities. On other levels, maturity and perhaps native ability are required, but not necessarily experience on lower levels in the same establishment. Naturally there are many exceptions to the principle here stated in general terms, but in the making of educational programs it is now not the exceptions but the prevalent conditions which require emphasis, in view of the deep-seated ignorance of many educators now influencing the development of vocational education. It is clearly to the interest of the worker as well as of society that transition from lower to higher levels should be rendered as easy and timely as practicable for each worker when maturity and ability justify it. That is far from being the case at present. Where production is highly organized, all the work of one “level” being confined to one great room or even shop, the best workers of this level are retained as long as possible, and every barrier is interposed to their movement upward—a situation in direct contrast to the “ladder” system of advancement inherent in most phases of a complex or handicraft calling, such as dress-making, teaching, farm work, and nursing, where increased skill and general competence grow as parts of a more or less unified structure.

Few systematic means have yet been devised toward assisting the worker to prepare for the better-paid levels. Entry upon these

is frequently attended by difficulties of the same general character as those encountered in getting employment in the first place. Uncertainty, hardship, initial blundering, the domineering attitudes of foremen and forewomen, all make these transitions extraordinarily painful and hazardous. Vocational training of the right sort is required for young workers in all highly organized industries no less in transition from intermediate or lower stages to higher stages than at the outset.

13. *Vocational training for specialized vocations.*—Most of the wage-earning work upon which girls and women enter is of a highly subdivided and specialized character, and this promises to be increasingly the case. War production has taken almost wholly the direction of enhanced “quantity production” of “standardized goods”—cartridges, uniforms, canned meats, aëroplane wings, shells, rifle sights, army shirts, and the like.

For the sake of the happiness of the worker herself as well as for the sake of enhanced production and general economic well-being, it is highly desirable that, as preliminary to entry upon productive work in any specialized process, the girl should receive specific and effective vocational training (and, where necessary or desirable, related instruction and social insight) in that process. For many specialized processes a few weeks, or, at most, months, may amply suffice to give this training, providing there be dedicated to it the same full working day, spirit of concentration, and pursuit of specific and definitely conceived ends that are characteristic of the vocational pursuit itself. Of intensive vocational training of this sort, either for first entry upon wage-earning or as a means whereby the worker of some experience can be assisted to advance to higher or better-paid levels, our public vocational schools provide as yet very few examples. Private effort has resulted in some suggestive experiments and examples upon which publicly supported work may be expected hereafter to be based. It requires courage, imagination, and practical insight of kinds not common among educators to undertake the promotion of intensive, “short-course” vocational training for productive specialties, especially when such training obviously involves large use of “productive work” as an educational means, followed by definitely organized “part-time”

participation on a wage-earning basis. Some day we shall in this connection realize better than we do now the large possibilities of the "vestibule school" (a type which should not be refused public support solely because the best place for its location is in a building chiefly dedicated to industry or commerce).

14. *Homemaking education*.—Space does not here permit extended discussion of the possibilities of vocational education for homemaking. Widespread attempts are now being made to introduce this vocational education under the name "home economics" into upper grades and high schools. Where girls have had or can be induced to obtain a large amount of practical experience in their own homes, and if the school instruction is definitely correlated with such home experience, the net outcome will be a form of "vocational extension education" which may prove to be somewhat valuable for farmers' daughters and others not leaving the home to work for wages. But for the large majority of girls in our industrial and commercial cities, home economics education given at the ages from twelve to sixteen will probably produce little permanent power of "execution"; but it will, when properly organized, give rise to appreciations of a fairly definite sort, useful as foundations for subsequent training in skill and management.

But effective homemaking education—for the modal American home expecting three to five children, and operated without help of servants—can be given only when "motive" is ripe. If girls of from seventeen to twenty could look forward to acceptable wage-earning careers as household domestics, then the year (or possibly more) just before entry upon that calling would be the best time for definite, practical education for that form of homemaking service. A few girls at sixteen or eighteen years of age—only daughters, or daughters with invalid mothers—can doubtless be found who will be effectually interested in preparing to take charge of the domestic work in their own homes. These two may be expected, in cities or suburban areas, to constitute a sufficient number to justify provision of practical training adapted to their needs.

But as regards the great majority of girls who serve some years as wage-earners apart from the home, it is doubtful whether

active motives for learning homemaking can be counted upon until after several years in the wage-earning career have passed, and the young woman has reason to anticipate the coming of conditions which will enable her to establish a home of her own. The years immediately preceding and immediately following marriage are, in the last analysis, the best for education in homemaking as a vocation. Of course existing social valuations—conventions, prejudices, fashions—are now opposed to programs having such education in view. But social valuations can readily be changed when sufficient leaders of ability see the light and are willing to spread it. There are many social forces now working in America toward the improvement of the home and the elevation of the vocation of homemaking.